

AL. 2. 1998-6 f
c. 2

CANADIANA

JAN 26 1998

BIG BEND PLANNING PROJECT

August 1997

draft

Alberta
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
Northeast Boreal Region

Big Bend Planning Project - Draft Copy

August 1997

Copies of this document may be obtained from:

**Information Centre
Alberta Environmental Protection
9920-108 Street
Edmonton, Alberta
T5K 2M4**

Telephone: Toll Free dial 310-0000 and ask for 422-2079



Planner's Update



Big Bend Planning Project

Draft Planning Document Available for Public Review

A Draft Updated Planning Document for the Big Bend Planning area located west of Athabasca is being released for Public Review. The Planning document is a rewrite and restructuring of the Big Bend Sub-Regional IRP that was approved by cabinet in 1985. Since this time, many changes have occurred to government policy and direction as well as to demands on natural resources within the planning area. A 1993 public review of the original IRP and considerable ongoing discussions with local stakeholders and municipalities provided the information necessary for the planning team to develop the draft Big Bend Planning Document.

Current Status

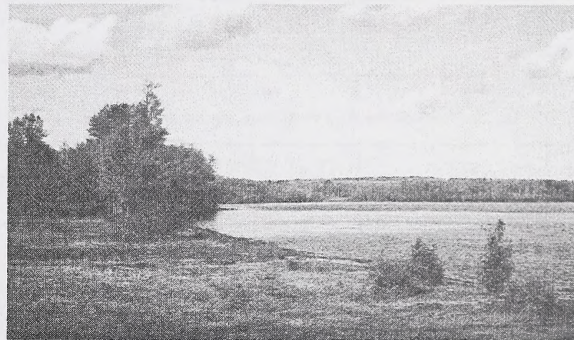
The Draft Planning document updates and restructures the existing Big Bend Sub-Regional IRP that was implemented in 1985. This rewrite was determined to be necessary for the following reasons:

- 1) Local stakeholder and municipality request
- 2) Shifting demands and values placed on natural resources
- 3) A need to update management practices to reflect current government policy and direction.

The Draft Big Bend Planning document is a culmination of several years effort to incorporate a shift in public demand for natural resources and to accommodate local interests and changes in government policy, direction and land allocations. The draft planning document is being released to inform the public of the management intentions within the Big Bend Planning area and to solicit feedback that will be required to finalize the plan. The release of this draft document will be followed by a series of public open house information/workshop sessions that will provide further direction to complete the final document. These information/workshop sessions are scheduled for late fall (post harvest).

Public Input Required

The Updated Big Bend Draft document is a "working" project that requires the review and feedback of the public in order to move towards finalizing the management strategies. Comment sheets are provided with the draft document and public feedback is encouraged.



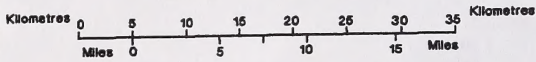
Document Highlights

- Resource Management Areas (RMA's) identified are White Area, Green Area, lakes, rivers and Spruce Island Conservation Area.
- Recreationally significant lakes have been identified within a RMA that provides protection and management of those elements that make the lakes attractive for recreation while also identifying which lakes have opportunities for certain small scale development.
- Continues to provide the opportunity for agricultural expansion.
- Emphasis on wildlife habitat conservation (e.g. four wildlife travel corridors have been identified since the 1985 IRP).
- Identifies the need to develop a White Area specific plan to help decide the "best" use for remaining public lands on a more detailed quarter section basis.
- Development will not occur at Orloff Lake.
- Places strong onus on industry to demonstrate how their activities can occur in sensitive areas (along lakes and rivers) in a manner that sustains important environmental values.
- Strengthens and clarifies mechanisms for public/community involvement in decision making about timber allocation and management.
- Supports designation of Hubert Lake and Phantom River Natural Area.

BIG BEND

Subregional Integrated Resource Plan

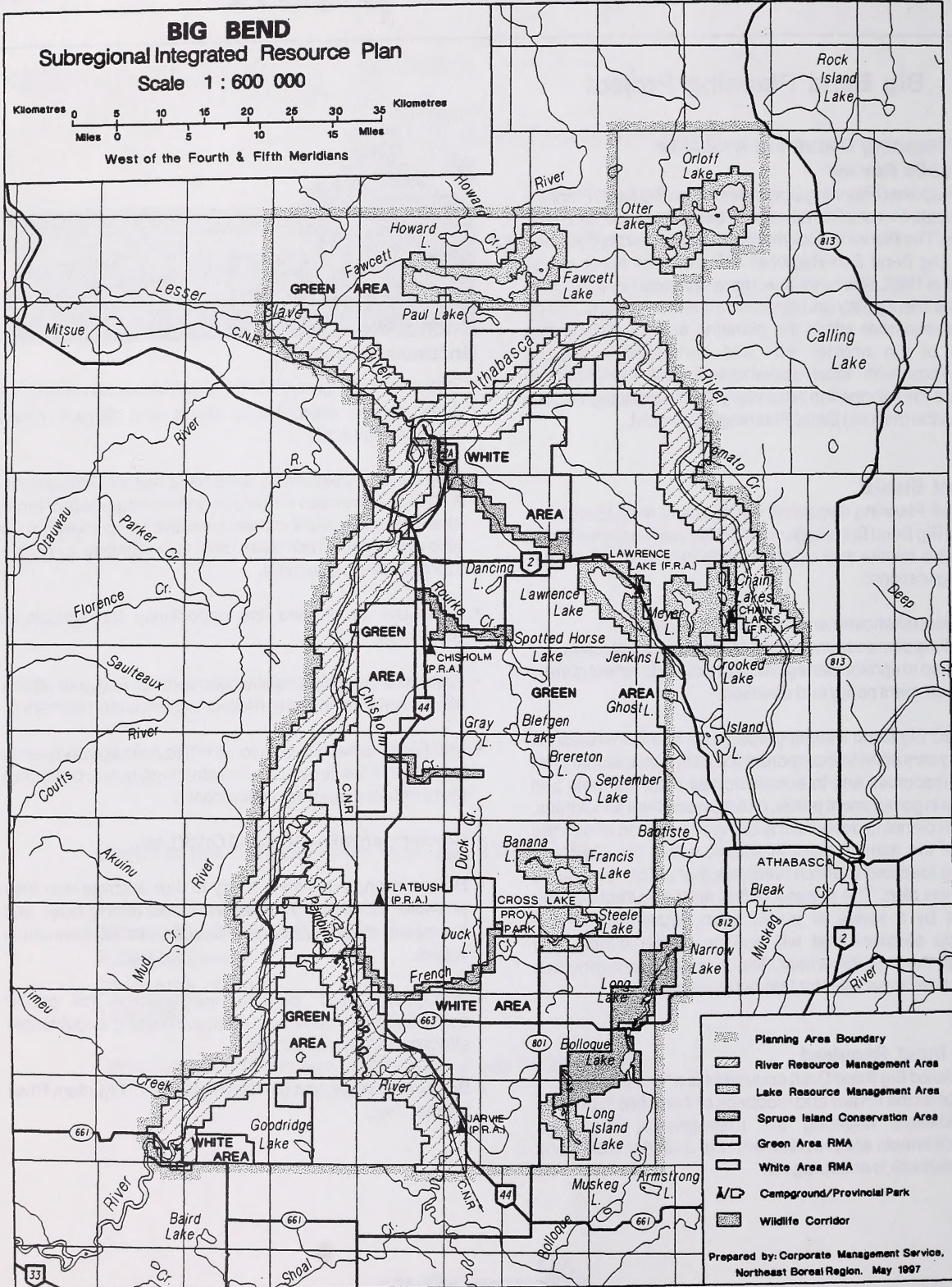
Scale 1 : 600 000



West of the Fourth & Fifth Meridians

TP. 74
TP. 73
TP. 72
TP. 71
TP. 70
TP. 69
TP. 68
TP. 67
TP. 66
TP. 65
TP. 64
TP. 63
TP. 62

TP. 75
TP. 74
TP. 73
TP. 72
TP. 71
TP. 70
TP. 69
TP. 68
TP. 67
TP. 66
TP. 65
TP. 64
TP. 63
TP. 62



- Planning Area Boundary
- River Resource Management Area
- Lake Resource Management Area
- Spruce Island Conservation Area
- Green Area RMA
- White Area RMA
- Campground/Provincial Park
- Wildlife Corridor

Prepared by: Corporate Management Service,
Northeast Boreal Region. May 1997

WHAT ARE YOUR VIEWS ABOUT THE DRAFT BIG BEND PLANNING PROJECT? COMMENT SHEET

PUBLIC CONSULTATION
SUMMER/FALL 1997

The draft Big Bend Planning Project is meant to generate discussion about public land and resource use in the planning area. This comment sheet provides a means for you to have your views considered in the new proposed management directions within the Big Bend planning area.

Please print clearly

Name (First and Last)

Address

Postal Code

--	--	--	--	--	--

1. Would you like to be on our mailing list?
Yes___ No___
2. How did you find out about the draft Big Bend Planning Project?
Poster___ Newspaper Ad___ Newspaper Story___ Radio___
Other(please specify)___
3. Which of the following categories best reflect your main interest in the Big Bend planning area?

(please check only one)

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> minerals | <input type="checkbox"/> wildlife |
| <input type="checkbox"/> fisheries | <input type="checkbox"/> ecological resources | <input type="checkbox"/> tourism |
| <input type="checkbox"/> timber | <input type="checkbox"/> recreation | |

4. Do you belong to an organization or group with an interest in the planning area?

Yes ___ No ___

If applicable, please state name: _____

Are you a: Member ___ Spokesperson ___ Position _____

5. Do you have any comments regarding public land and resource use in the Big Bend planning area?

6. Does the draft Big Bend Planning Project consider your interests?

Yes ___ If yes, please explain. (What do you like about the plan?)

No ___ If no, why not? (What don't you like about the plan?)

7. Please prioritize your interests in the Big Bend planning area.

8. Taking into account the needs of other stakeholders, what ideas do you have for the resolution of the concerns that you have identified? Please list other stakeholders you feel should be involved.

COMMENTS:

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 1
 Legislation and Policy Framework 1

KEY DIRECTIONS AND IMPLICATIONS 2
 Agriculture 2
 Fisheries 2
 Timber 3
 Minerals 3
 Ecological Resources 4
 Recreation 4
 Wildlife 4

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AREAS 5
 White Area RMA 5
 Spruce Island Conservation Area RMA 11
 Lake St. Louis RMA 13
 River RMA 17
 Grass Area RMA 20

APPENDIX 1: LEGISLATION AND POLICY 23

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 - Big Bend Planning Area and Resource Management Areas 1
Figure 2 - Tabulation of Recreational Lake Management 23

We appreciate your comments. Thank you for taking time to answer these questions.

PLEASE RETURN THIS COMMENT SHEET

TO:


Joe Prusak
Community Relations
Northeast Boreal Region
Alberta Environmental Protection
2nd Floor, Provincial Building
9503 Beaverhill Road, Box 1019
Lac La Biche, AB T0A 2C0

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

CALL TOLL-FREE:

Joe Prusak
Community Relations
310-0000; ask for 623-5488

FAX#: 623-5239



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2016

<https://archive.org/details/bigbendplanningp00albe>

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
Legislation and Policy Framework	1
KEY DIRECTIONS AND IMPLICATIONS	3
Agriculture	3
Fisheries	3
Timber	3
Minerals	4
Ecological Resources	4
Recreation	4
Wildlife	4
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AREAS	5
White Area RMA	5
Spruce Island Conservation Area RMA	11
Lake Based RMA	13
River RMA	23
Green Area RMA	26
APPENDIX 1: LEGISLATION AND POLICY	29
LIST OF FIGURES	
Figure 1 Big Bend Planning Area and Resource Management Areas	7
Figure 2 Tabulation of Recreational Lakes Management	21

INTRODUCTION

Since the Big Bend Integrated Resource Plan was approved in 1985, changes have occurred to government policy direction and to demands and values placed on natural resources by society -- locally, regionally, provincially and nationally. The planning area encompasses land along the big bend of the Athabasca River and west of the town of Athabasca. The following points outline the significant changes that have affected natural resource management in the Big Bend planning area and resulted in the new proposed management directions.

- The economic value of timber (coniferous and deciduous) has increased substantially. High timber prices have increased the removal of timber on private land and increased demands to cut timber on remaining public land. Higher timber values have also affected the value of forested lands.
- There are two Forest Management Agreement holders in the Planning Area; Weyerhaeuser and Alberta Pacific Forest Industries Inc.
- Societal concern for more science-based environmental management has resulted in an ecological approach focusing on landscapes which include rivers, lakes and Green and White Area lands.
- Intensification of the agricultural land base and the increase in timber demands and harvesting has elevated the importance and value of remaining White Area public land (particularly that with mature timber) as habitat (e.g., for moose) and recreational land.
- The system for allocation of public land has changed to one of competitive allocation based on sealed tender and public auction.
- Coordinated area land planning between provincial and municipal governments.

Legislation and Policy Framework

Various provincial government agencies administer policy and legislation and associated regulations to manage provincial public land and resources. The following policy and legislation is the most relevant to the Big Bend planning area: Public Lands Administration in Alberta (White and Green Area); Public Lands Act; Forest Act; Municipal Government Act; Mines and Minerals Act; Wilderness Areas, Ecological Reserves and Natural Areas Act; Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act 1994; Fish and Wildlife Policy for Alberta; Alberta Forest Conservation Strategy; Alberta Special Places; Forest and Prairie Protection Act; The Water Act; and finally the Wetlands Policy (please refer to Appendix I for a brief description of each legislation identified).

KEY DIRECTIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The following points outline the key new directions proposed within the Big Bend planning area and some of their implications.

Agriculture

- Using the broad resource management principles outlined in this sub-regional plan, a detailed integrated decision-making process needs to occur in the White Area, which would determine a long-term strategy for the land base in this Resource Management Area (RMA). The strategy would be based on detailed physical inventories and public input. Considerations for the strategy would include physical capability of the land base and the long term sustainability of other resources including habitat, timber, watershed, presence of sensitive land forms and conservation.
- The plan recognizes the current provincial policy of competitive allocation of land in the White Area, i.e., the tender/public auction process.
- No new grazing dispositions will be issued in the River and Lake RMAs. If grazing dispositions are cancelled, they will be reviewed by concerned agencies to see whether they should be reallocated. The intent is to keep this land as public land and, if cancelled, have them revert to vacant status.

Fisheries

- Focus will be on naturally reproducing fish populations.

Timber

- Suitable areas for timber management in the White Area will be identified through a more detailed integrated decision-making process. Timber harvesting is envisioned through the use of alternative silvicultural systems which will allow for harvesting while retaining a forest landscape.
- Onus is more strongly placed on industry to demonstrate how timber harvesting can occur in sensitive areas in a manner that meets the criteria (or objectives) to sustain important values.
- Industries and users will be required to meet certain objectives regardless of the different ground rules or guidelines that they follow (e.g., along rivers).
- Strengthens and clarifies mechanisms for public/community involvement in decision-making about timber allocation and management.
- Provides context for how timber harvesting can occur (through use of objectives) as opposed to not allowing harvesting (use of prescriptive guidelines).

Minerals

- Supports continued exploration and development of minerals resources.
- Ensures proponents meet objectives for management intent around sensitive waterbodies (recreational lakes and river systems).
- Main challenge for proponents will be to mitigate the effects of their disturbance which occurs while developing access.

Ecological Resources

- The main river systems (Athabasca, Lesser Slave and Pembina) are identified as one resource management area to provide consistent management direction for that ecosystem. The planning area boundary is expanded to incorporate both sides of the Athabasca River.
- Sensitive waterbodies, valued for their ecological integrity, pristine nature, fish and wildlife habitat and populations, will be maintained through designation of management intent and objectives or through formal mechanisms.
- Support management of Spruce Island Natural Area and designation of Hubert Lake and Phantom River as Natural Area Candidate sites.

Recreation

- Recreationally significant lakes have been allocated to different resource management areas within a framework that provides for protection and management of those elements that make the lakes attractive for recreation while also identifying which lakes have opportunities for certain kinds of development. There are three different intents:
 - lakes that should receive little or no development and access (and if any, primitive types of development or temporary access);
 - lakes that are already developed and where additional development would exceed their capacity or begin to erode those attributes that make them attractive; and
 - lakes that can support additional development and, as such, probably require more detailed integrated decision-making for development to occur.
- A public land base will be maintained in the White Area for recreation and retention of wildlife habitat. Aesthetic, recreational and habitat values of the public land base will be evaluated through a local integrated decision-making process.

Wildlife

- Important moose travel corridors across the White Area between wooded uplands and river valleys will be maintained.
- The protection of wildlife habitat has become a higher priority within the White Area.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AREAS

Five general Resource Management Areas (RMAs) have been identified in the Big Bend planning area (refer to Figure 1). A Resource Management Area is an area of common resource management intent. For each RMA, there is a general management intent identified for resource management priorities in that area. Specific resource management objectives and guidelines have been developed for each RMA. The management objectives express what needs to be accomplished for that resource sector and the management guidelines express the way in which the objectives are going to be achieved, and are also intended to ensure effective integration of the objectives.

WHITE AREA RMA

This RMA includes all the White Area lands in the planning area except those covered by the lake and river based RMAs as well as the Spruce Island Conservation RMA.

The RMA is located within the Boreal Mixedwood Ecoregion and is covered by a mixture of natural vegetation including spruce, pine, aspen and balsam poplar interspersed with extensive areas of muskeg. The main communities in the planning area are the hamlets of Smith and Hondo to the north and Jarvie, Flatbush and Fawcett to the south.

Agriculture is an important contributor to the local economy. The land base is predominantly used for coarse grain and forage production with cattle as the main commodity. Currently there are 128 dispositions (i.e., Grazing Lease, Grazing Licence and Forest Grazing Licenses) involving 61,115 acres and providing a carrying capacity of 13,765 Animal Unit Months. Most of the remaining unoccupied Crown land has physical characteristics which limit agriculture capability in this RMA. The Black Bear Grazing Reserve, east of Fawcett, provides 9952 Animal Unit Months of grazing on an annual basis. This grazing reserve is an important source of supplementary livestock grazing.

The diverse natural habitat of the Boreal Forest provides habitat for a wide array of wildlife species. As the arable land is developed, the extent of natural habitat has decreased. However, remaining undeveloped areas retain representative natural habitat on public land within the White Area.

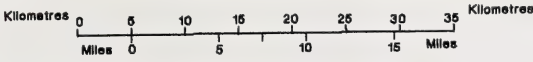
Petroleum and natural gas dispositions underlie approximately 65 percent of this RMA, while natural gas fields underlie approximately 55 percent. The RMA encompasses the Hondo natural gas field, portions of 13 other gas fields as well as extensive infrastructure for production and transportation of mineral products.

Recreational activities are generally dispersed (e.g., hunting, berry picking, snowmobiling). Opportunities exist for small-scale tourism development.

BIG BEND

Subregional Integrated Resource Plan

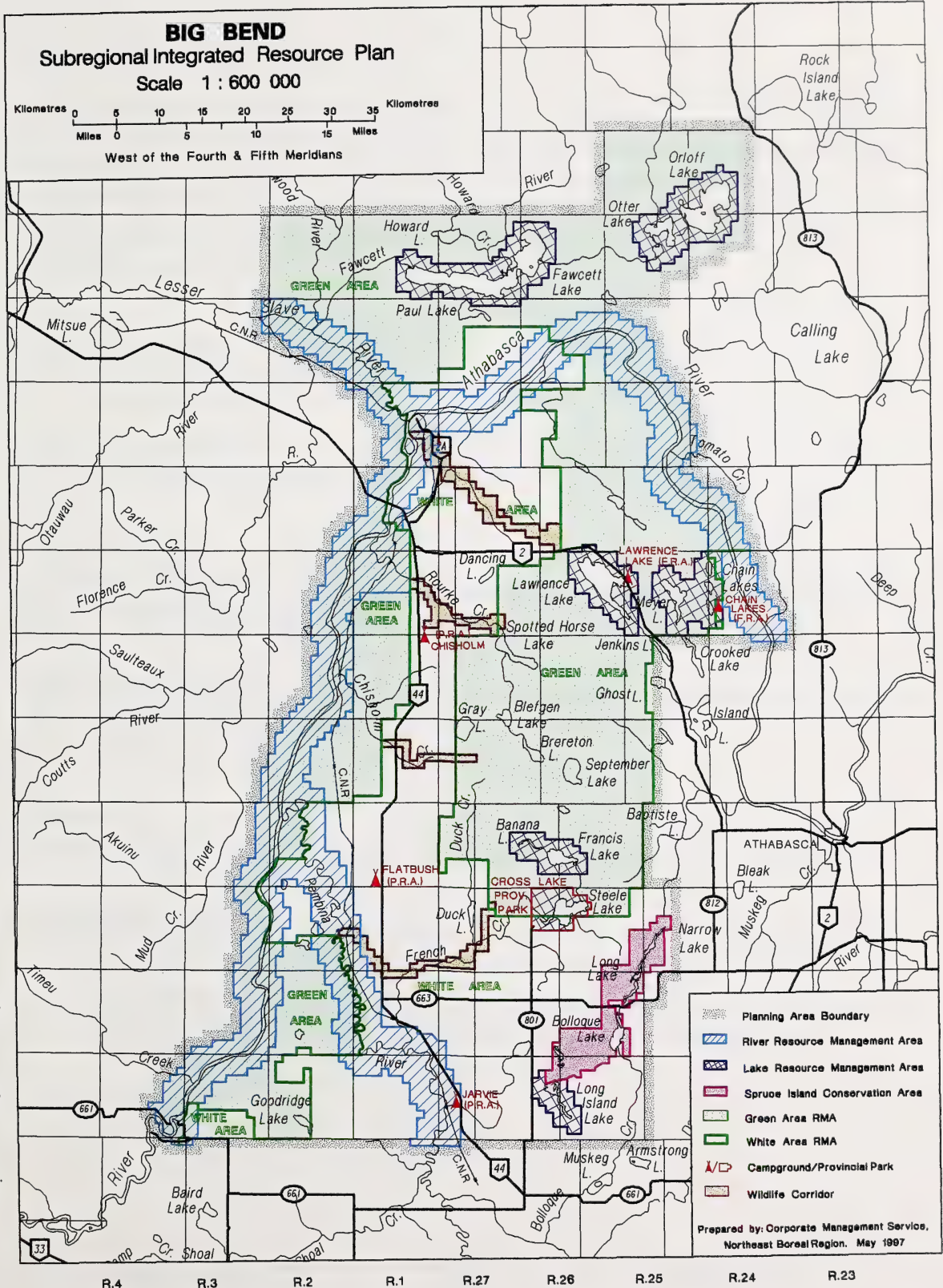
Scale 1 : 600 000



West of the Fourth & Fifth Meridians

TP. 74
TP. 73
TP. 72
TP. 71
TP. 70
TP. 69
TP. 68
TP. 67
TP. 66
TP. 65
TP. 64
TP. 63
TP. 62

TP. 75
TP. 74
TP. 73
TP. 72
TP. 71
TP. 70
TP. 69
TP. 68
TP. 67
TP. 66
TP. 65
TP. 64
TP. 63
TP. 62



	Planning Area Boundary
	River Resource Management Area
	Lake Resource Management Area
	Spruce Island Conservation Area
	Green Area RMA
	White Area RMA
	Campground/Provincial Park
	Wildlife Corridor

Prepared by: Corporate Management Service,
Northeast Boreal Region, May 1987

R.4 R.3 R.2 R.1 R.27 R.26 R.25 R.24 R.23

FIGURE 1 RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AREAS

General Management Intent

To integrate agriculture expansion with conservation of the wildlife resources and provide opportunities for other resource activities based on sustainable environmental practices. A detailed integrated decision-making process needs to occur in the White Area, which would determine a long-term strategy for the land base in this RMA. The strategy would be based on detailed physical inventories and public input. Considerations for the strategy would include physical capability of the land base and the long-term sustainability of other resources including habitat, timber, watershed, presence of sensitive land forms and conservation.

Agriculture

Management Objectives:

1. To allow agricultural expansion.
2. To manage the agricultural land base under grazing disposition.

Management Guidelines:

1. Public lands will be managed based on multiple land use principles.

Ecological Systems

Management Objectives:

1. To protect Natural Areas, Ecological Reserves, Parks and Special Places nomination sites.
2. To manage public lands using landscape principles to maintain biodiversity.

Management Guidelines:

1. To encourage designation of Phantom River as a Natural Area. The existing protective notation designation will be maintained.

Fisheries

Management Objective:

1. To maintain fish habitat suitability in streams for spawning, rearing and food production.

Management Guidelines:

1. Public lands with permanent streams will be managed to protect and maintain fish habitat.
2. Buffers of natural vegetation will be maintained between streams and any resource development activity.
3. Activities which may introduce nutrients and sediment which could negatively affect fish bearing waters will be subject to special operating conditions to mitigate impact.

Minerals and Surface Materials

Management Objective:

1. To allow for the exploration and development of minerals and surface material resources.

Management Guidelines:

1. Mineral resource exploration and development in sensitive areas will be subject to site-specific operating conditions to mitigate negative environmental impact.

Recreation and Tourism

Management Objectives:

1. To retain a public land base for dispersed recreation opportunities.
2. To maintain the recreational and environmental values around lakes and wetland.

Timber

Management Objectives:

1. Timber will be managed as a resource while ensuring biodiversity, natural variation and conservation of ecosystems.

Management Guidelines:

1. Allocation of timber will be based upon:
 - consultation with local communities and key stakeholders
 - the use of alternative timber harvesting systems (e.g., shelterwood systems, seed tree systems, selective cutting systems, reforestation systems and uneven aged management practices), and allocation systems (both commercial and for personal use)

Wildlife

Management Objectives:

1. To maintain native habitat diversity (e.g., large forests of mature aspen, mature conifers, large dead and fallen trees) in support of the range of wildlife traditionally found there (e.g., barred owl, migratory birds, flying squirrels).
2. To maintain important habitat (e.g., wintering areas, travel corridors) for moose, elk and deer.

Management Guidelines:

1. Natural ecosystems will be maintained by ensuring retention of forest types representative of all species and age classes.
2. The four ungulate travel corridors will be maintained as identified on Figure 1.
3. Public lands with permanent streams and wetlands will be managed to protect and maintain wildlife habitat.

SPRUCE ISLAND CONSERVATION AREA RMA

This RMA encompasses a portion of White Area public land in the south east corner of the planning area, along with Spruce Island, Horseshoe and Elbow lakes. Bolloque, Narrow and Long lakes are addressed separately though the Lakes RMA. The management intent of this RMA supports the management direction around these lakes.

This part of the planning area is unique for several reasons. The diverse and relatively unaltered nature of vegetation and natural features, particularly the complex of sand ridges and productive wetlands, provide habitat for a variety of water dependent and forest bird species (e.g., bald eagles, pileated woodpeckers, ruffed grouse) in addition to moose, white-tailed and mule deer, elk and furbearers. These factors, along with the wildland nature of the area, make it attractive for a variety of year-round recreational pursuits (e.g., birding, OHV, snowmobiling, hunting, hiking and biking).

The area is one of the few remaining contiguous portions of public land in the White Area. Petroleum and natural gas leases underlie most of the RMA. Agricultural capability is marginal. Access is limited. Timber is considered very young and juvenile.

Management Intent

To conserve the ecological values and unique combination of natural features, vegetation and habitat while providing opportunities for a range of recreational uses. Limited opportunities for industrial activity and access will be provided.

Access Management

Management Objectives:

1. To restrict development of new access (including all-weather roads).
2. To encourage coordinated use of existing access routes.

Management Guidelines:

1. No new or upgraded public access will be provided. Access developed for industrial purposes will be designed to control unauthorized use.
2. Major transportation and utility corridors will not normally be permitted, unless the proponent can demonstrate mitigation of effects.
3. Existing public access routes may be maintained in their present condition.
4. Proponents of resource development will use existing access and infrastructure. Should modifications to existing access or new routes/access be requested, these will be assessed on a site-specific basis.

Agriculture

Management Objective:

1. To maintain the current grazing dispositions, insofar as this is compatible with the primary management objective for this RMA.

Management Guidelines:

1. New grazing dispositions will not be issued; but existing grazing dispositions that are cancelled, with the lands reverting to vacant status, will be reviewed by concerned agencies to determine whether they should be reallocated.

Ecological Systems

Management Objectives:

1. To protect Spruce Island Natural Area.

Fisheries

Management Objective:

1. To maintain the quality of fish habitat and fish populations in Bolloque Creek, Horseshoe and Elbow Lakes.

Minerals and Surface Materials

Management Objectives:

1. To allow minerals exploration and development where conflicts with other resources and with the environment can be adequately mitigated.
2. To provide for the development of aggregate resources (surface materials).

Management Guidelines:

1. Only low impact seismic technique, specifically no use of bulldozers; and hand cut lines with ATV mounted drill will be allowed. Minerals development will take into account visual impact and public access.

Recreation and Tourism

Management Objectives:

1. To maintain opportunities for wildland recreation activities of a low-impact and dispersed nature.
2. To provide opportunities for use of existing OHV trails.

Management Guidelines:

1. Off Highway Vehicle user groups will be encouraged to develop a stewardship program for maintenance of OHV trails with wildland characteristics for day use only.
2. No additional recreational facilities will be allowed.

Timber

Management Objectives:

1. To maintain the diversity and natural variation of the forested landscapes.

Management Guidelines:

1. No timber permits will be issued.

Wildlife

Management Objectives:

1. To maintain the diversity of unaltered wildlife habitat in support of a range of wildlife traditionally found within the RMA (e.g., bald eagles, elk, pileated woodpeckers, moose, deer and furbearers).

LAKE BASED RMA

Thirteen lakes in the planning area have been included in one Lake RMA. All of these lakes fall within the Central Mixedwood subregion of the Boreal Forest Ecoregion. The lakes were identified in the original Big Bend IRP of 1985, as being recreationally and ecologically significant. Their significance is based on a combination of certain attributes (e.g., sport fisheries, wildlife, water, pristine nature, beaches, aesthetics and recreational facilities) that make them attractive. Aspects such as water quality, accessibility, level of use and carrying capacity vary between the lakes.

Several resource management objectives and guidelines apply to all twelve lakes in the RMA. Steele Lake is managed specifically through the Cross Lake Provincial Park Management Plan. By incorporating these lakes into one RMA, a comprehensive approach is taken that focuses on the management of the recreational water bodies based on their capability and inherent qualities of individual lakes. The lakes within the RMA have been separated into three different groups, with common resource management intents identified for each group. Objectives and guidelines specific to these groups have been developed. This approach allocates certain lakes for particular levels of development and types of recreational use. To complement the text material, a spreadsheet has been developed to help describe the proposed direction for lakes within the RMA (Figure 2).

The Lakes RMA consists of the following lakes, including islands, and the land within approximately 800 m of the lakeshore:

Lakes within RMA

Banana Lake
Bolloque Lake
Chain Lakes
Fawcett Lake
Francis Lake
Lawrence Lake
Long Island Lake
Long Lake
Meyer Lake
Narrow Lake
Orloff Lake
Otter Lake
Steele Lake (Cross Lake Provincial Park)

General Management Intent for all Lakes in the RMA

To protect the natural integrity and ecological diversity of the lakes within the planning area while providing opportunities for wildland recreation and resource extraction.

General Resource Management Objectives and Guidelines for Twelve Lakes in the Lake RMA, Steele Lake is managed through the Cross Lake Provincial Park Management Plan

Access Management

Management Objectives:

1. In general, to restrict development of new access (including all-weather roads).
2. To encourage coordinated use of existing access routes.

Management Guidelines:

1. No new or upgraded public access will be provided.
2. Major transportation and utility corridors will not normally be permitted, unless the proponent can demonstrate mitigation of effects.
3. Existing public access routes may be maintained in their present condition.
4. Proponents of resource development will use existing access and infrastructure. Should modifications to existing access or new routes/access be requested, these will be assessed on a site-specific basis.

Agriculture

Management Objectives:

1. To maintain the current grazing dispositions, insofar as this is compatible with the primary management objective for this RMA.

Management Guidelines:

1. Generally, new grazing dispositions will not be issued.
2. Existing grazing dispositions that are cancelled, with the lands reverting to vacant status, will be reviewed by concerned agencies to determine whether these lands should be reallocated.

Fisheries

Management Objectives:

1. To protect the integrity of shoreline fish spawning habitat.
2. To reduce man-caused disturbances which increase nutrient loading and sedimentation.
3. To protect naturally-reproducing fish population and maintain opportunities for wildland fishing experiences.

Minerals and Surface Materials

Management Objectives:

1. To allow minerals exploration and development where conflicts with other resources and with the environment can be adequately mitigated.

Management Guidelines:

1. Proponents of minerals exploration and development within 400 m of the lakes will submit a development strategy that addresses the following:
 - protection of lake aesthetics (minimizes visual intrusion);
 - prevention of lake sedimentation and water quality deterioration;
 - avoidance of important old growth forest;
 - protection of significant habitats;
 - identification of timing restrictions for new activity and for facility construction; and
 - consultation with stakeholders about the proposed program.
2. From 400 m to 800 m of the lakes low impact seismic techniques only will be allowed. Minerals development will take into account visual impact and public access.

Wildlife

Management Objectives:

1. To protect an adequate diversity of wildlife habitat for water-based, riparian and backshore species (e.g., eagles, grebes, furbearers).

Timber

Management Objectives:

1. To maintain the diversity and natural variation of the forested landscape around the lakes.
2. To provide limited opportunities for timber harvesting.

Management Guidelines:

1. Generally, timber harvesting will not be allowed within 400 m of the high water mark of the lake. However, harvesting may be considered within 400 m if the proponent submits a detailed logging plan that is based on the following:
 - protection of lake aesthetics (no visual intrusion);
 - prevention of lake sedimentation;
 - prevention of adverse impacts on water quality;
 - retention old growth characteristics;
 - consultation with the lead land management agency on the level of public consultation required;
 - provision of timing of proposed operations; and
 - identification of road and landing timber decking locations.
2. Timber harvesting will be allowed using landscape logging techniques within the remaining 400 m to 800 m of the lakes.

Lake Specific Direction

Four Lakes Group

This group consists of the following lakes:

- Chain Lakes
- Long Lake
- Narrow Lake
- Long Island Lake

Rationale

There is reasonable access to these lakes and focus will be on maintaining existing access rather than new access development. All the lakes have sport fisheries, however, recreation opportunities are limited by the smaller public land base and the low-lying swampy terrain. These lakes are popular with several institutional users and have some cottage development. However, the ability of these lakes to support additional recreational development while retaining the attributes that make them attractive is very limited.

Long Island Lake receives intensive recreational use and is popular for water-based sporting activities. The lake is not considered capable for further recreational developments.

Management Intent

To manage these lakes to provide water-based recreation opportunities with an emphasis on maintenance of existing recreational uses and programs. The recreational and ecological values that contribute to the attractiveness of the lakes will be protected.

Recreation and Tourism

Management Objectives:

1. To maintain the public land base around the lakes for nature-based recreation and the current diversity of recreational uses.
2. To ensure that new access development will not adversely impact the attributes that make these lakes attractive for recreational use.

Management Guidelines:

1. New recreational developments will not be allowed.

Two Lakes Group

This group consists of the following lakes:

- Fawcett Lake
- Lawrence Lake

Rationale

These lakes attract the most intensive recreational use in the planning area. The lakes also have the most significant potential for recreation and tourism development. There are already existing developments, both commercial and public, and each lake supports sport fisheries.

Management Intent

To manage these lakes as recreation destination areas for a wide range of upland, forest and water-based recreation activities. Emphasis will be placed on protection of the recreational and ecological values that contribute to the attractiveness of the lakes and maintenance of nature-based recreation opportunities. Small scale recreation developments are appropriate in this area and might include a combination of lodge, cabin, camping and boating facilities as well as related food, supplies and recreational services catering to the general public.

Recreation and Tourism

Management Objectives:

1. To maintain the current public land base around the lakes for nature-based recreational opportunities.
2. To provide opportunities for the leasing of public land for small-scale tourism developments.

Management Guidelines:

1. Recreational development applications will be addressed through the Alberta Tourism Recreational Leasing (ATRL) process.
2. The ATRL process includes specific requirements for addressing consistency with the policy and management intent and environmental and economic factors relating to proposed developments. The process also provides for public disclosure and consultation on development applications.
3. Proposals for new recreational developments or expansion of existing developments should pay particular attention to:
 - lake aesthetics;
 - lake sedimentation;
 - water quality;
 - old growth forest; and
 - significant wildlife and fisheries habitat.
4. Appropriate locations for developments will be consistent with the Lake Management Plan, where one exists, or determined on a case-by-case basis.

Six Lakes Group

This group consists of the following lakes:

- Banana Lake Bolloque Lake
- Francis Lake Meyer Lake
- Orloff Lake Otter Lake

Rationale

These lakes support sport fisheries and are destinations for extensive recreation. However, they are minor destinations relative to the lakes in the other RMAs and are attractive for the wildland recreation experiences they provide. Orloff Lake hosts significant cultural resources. The lakes exhibit natural diversity in relatively pristine conditions and have limited, and, in some cases, no recreation facility development. There is either no public access or very limited access.

Management Intent

To manage these lakes to provide wildland, water-based recreation opportunities while protecting the ecological and recreational values of these lakes. Emphasis will be placed on conserving critical wildlife habitat and populations and sensitive watersheds. Access will remain limited.

Recreation and Tourism

Management Objectives:

1. To maintain the current public land base around the lakes for wildland recreational opportunities of a low impact and dispersed nature.

Management Guidelines:

1. No recreation developments will be allowed.

Wildlife

Management Objective:

1. To protect the nesting colonies of heron and eagles on Orloff and Meyer Lakes.

FIGURE 2 TABULATION OF RECREATIONAL LAKES MANAGEMENT

LAKES	BANANA	BOLLOQUE	FRANCIS	MEYER	ORLOFF	OTTER	FAWCETT	LAWRENCE	LONG ISLAND	CHAIN	LONG	NARROW	STEELE	
RMA Boundary	800 m→												800 m	
Lakeshore Mgmt. Plan	No→						Yes	Partially Completed	No→					No
Public Access	Coordinated use of existing lake access routes will be encouraged & no new or upgraded public access will be provided.→												Managed in accordance with Cross Lake Provincial Park management plan. ↓	
	There is either no public access or very limited access; access will remain limited.→							There is reasonable access and the focus will be on maintaining existing access rather than new access development.→						
Industrial Access	Existing access routes and infrastructure to be used & new access development restricted; requests for modifications to existing access or new access routes will be assessed on a site-specific basis; any new access developed will be gated.→													
Fisheries	Focus on protection of naturally reproducing fish populations, integrity of shoreline fish spawning habitat, & lake quality.→													
Commercial Fishing	No→				Yes	No	Yes	No	No→					No
Minerals & Surface Materials	-Continued exploration & development where conflicts with other resources & environmental management intent around the lakes can be adequately mitigated; main challenge for proponents will be meeting access requirements.→ -Minerals exploration & development within 400 m of the lakes will require a development strategy to be submitted.→ -Low impact seismic techniques only will be allowed in remaining 400 - 800 m.→												Managed in accordance with Cross Lake Provincial Park Management plan. ↓	
Wildlife Habitat	Protection of adequate diversity of wildlife habitat for water-based, riparian, & backwater species.→													
					Protection of nesting colonies of heron & eagles. →									
Agriculture Dispositions	-Maintain current number of grazing dispositions; generally no new ones issued.→ -Existing grazing dispositions that are cancelled will be reviewed to determine if they should be reallocated. Intent is to have them revert to vacant status.→													
Timber Harvesting	-Context provided for limited timber harvesting opportunities.→ -Sensitive lake areas will be managed more consistently to maintain diversity & natural variation of forested landscape around the lakes.→ -Onus is more on industry to demonstrate in a detailed logging plan how timber harvesting can occur in sensitive areas in a manner that meets protection values.→ -Timber harvesting will not generally be allowed within 400 m of the high water mark of the lake; may be considered if proponent submits an acceptable detailed plan.→ -Timber harvesting will be allowed using landscape logging techniques within remaining 400-800 m→													
Recreation & Tourism	Provides for protection and management of those elements that make the lakes attractive for recreation.→													
	Maintain the current public land base to provide wildland recreation opportunities of a low impact & dispersed nature.→						Maintain the current public land base for nature-based recreational opportunities.→			Maintain public land base for nature-based recreation and the current diversity of recreational uses.→				
recreation development	Existing recreation activities will continue.→													
	New recreation developments will not be allowed.→						Opportunities exist for leasing public land for small-scale tourism developments; proposals to be assessed through the ATRL process.→			New recreational developments will not be allowed.→				
high levels of use							Attracts the most intensive recreational use of all the lakes.→			Attracts the most intensive recreational use of all the lakes.		Receives intermittent high levels of use.→		Receives intermittent high levels of use.

RIVER RMA

The RMA includes the following rivers and the land within approximately 1600m of their banks:

- * Athabasca River
- * Pembina River
- * Lesser Slave River

The river valleys are areas of high ecological diversity and sensitivity, as well as being important for numerous values and uses. The lack of access to portions of the valleys has meant that large, mature conifers and aspen trees still exist in some areas, providing habitat for species such as fisher, marten, barred owls and neo-tropical migratory birds. The valleys are also significant as travel corridors for wildlife, particularly large ungulates such as moose. The valleys were also used historically by humans as travel corridors and trails (e.g., the old Hondo-Chisholm trail). It is primarily this convergence of values and uses along the valleys that makes them vulnerable to increased pressure and use.

The Athabasca, Pembina and Slave Rivers along with small rivers and tributaries support game fish populations. Walleye and pike are the most important and popular species, however, goldeye, mountain whitefish and arctic grayling also occur. All the rivers, and some of their tributaries, provide important fish spawning habitat; in particular, the confluence of the Pembina and Athabasca rivers is of national significance for walleye spawning.

Portions of Rourke Creek, around the Athabasca River, are popular for a number of recreational activities, particularly camping, ATV use, fishing and berry-picking. It receives frequent use by local residents as well as visitors from outside the sub region.

The Athabasca River and Rourke Creek have been nominated as Special Places under the Alberta Special Places Program.

Management Intent

To protect the natural integrity and ecological diversity of the main river systems while providing some opportunities for wildland recreation and resource extraction and use.

Access Management

Management Objectives:

1. To restrict development of new access (including all-weather roads).
2. To encourage coordinated use of existing access routes.

Management Guidelines:

1. No new or upgraded public access will be provided. Any access developed for industrial purposes will be developed through access management.
2. Major transportation and utility corridors will not normally be permitted, unless the proponent can demonstrate mitigation of effects.
3. Existing public access routes may be maintained in their present condition.
4. Proponents of resource development will use existing access and infrastructure. Should modifications to existing access or new routes/access be requested, these will be assessed on a site-specific basis.

Agriculture

Management Objective:

1. To maintain the present number of grazing dispositions, insofar as this is compatible with the primary management intent for this RMA.

Management Guidelines:

1. Generally, new grazing dispositions will not be issued.
2. Existing grazing dispositions that are cancelled, with the lands reverting to vacant status, will be reviewed by concerned agencies to determine whether these lands should be reallocated.

Fisheries

Management Objectives:

1. To protect the rivers from siltation.
2. To protect the nationally significant fish spawning habitat at the confluence of the Pembina and Athabasca rivers.

Minerals and Surface Materials

Management Objectives:

1. To allow minerals exploration and development where conflicts with other resources and with the environment can be adequately mitigated.

Management Guidelines:

1. Proponents of minerals exploration and development within 800 m of the rivers will be developing a strategy with resource managers that addresses the following:
 - protection of river aesthetics (minimizes visual intrusion);
 - prevention of river sedimentation and water quality deterioration;
 - avoidance of important old growth forest;
 - protection of significant habitats;
 - identification of timing restrictions for new activity and for facility construction; and
 - consultation with stakeholders about the proposed program.
2. Low impact seismic techniques, as identified in #1 above, will be allowed within the remaining 800 m to 1600 m of the rivers. Minerals development will take into account visual impact and public access.

Recreation and Tourism

Management Objectives:

1. To maintain opportunities for a diversity of year-round land and water-based recreational activities.
2. To protect the Rourke Creek recreation area.

Management Guideline:

1. No recreation development on Rourke Creek will be allowed.

Timber

Management Objectives:

1. To provide limited opportunities for timber harvesting.
2. To harvest the timber in a manner that minimizes adverse impacts and maintains aesthetic, environmental, ecological and recreational integrity.
3. To protect natural vegetation in the portions of this RMA which lie within the White Area.

Management Guidelines:

1. Generally, timber harvesting in the Green Area will not be allowed within 800 m of the rivers high water mark. However, harvesting may be considered within 800 m if the proponent submits a detailed logging plan that is based on the following:
 - protection of river aesthetics (no visual intrusion);
 - prevention of river sedimentation;
 - prevention of adverse impacts on significant wildlife habitat;
 - prevention of adverse impacts on water quality;
 - retention of old growth characteristics;
 - protection of slope stability;
 - consultation with the lead land management agency on the level of public consultation required;
 - provision of timing of proposed operations; and
 - identification of road and landing timber decking locations.
2. Due to the importance of the forested land in this RMA, this land will be protected for its habitat and vegetative values.

Wildlife

Management Objectives:

1. To maintain a diversity of native vegetation in the river valleys for wildlife habitat.

Management Guidelines:

1. The removal of vegetation will be minimized.

GREEN AREA RMA

This RMA includes all the Green Area lands within the planning area, except those included in the lake-based and river-based RMAs.

The RMA lies within the Northern Boreal Mixedwood Ecoregion and includes a combination of both coniferous and deciduous stands. To the north, part of the land base is held by Weyerhaeuser under a Forest Management Agreement. To the east, part of the land base is included in Alberta Pacific Forest Industries' Forest Management Agreement. Within these FMAs, other companies hold some embedded quotas for coniferous timber.

There are extensive areas of low-lying swamp and muskeg in the eastern portion of the RMA (e.g., around Spotted Horse, Blefgren, Brereton and September lakes) thereby severely limiting recreation potential.

Management Intent

To maintain the forested land base and manage it to provide a sustainable supply of timber to meet present and future demands while maintaining other non-renewable and renewable natural resource values and opportunities.

Agriculture

Management Objectives:

1. To provide opportunities for unimproved grazing.
2. Protection of riparian habitat along stream banks and lake shores.

Management Guidelines:

1. Only grazing permits or licences will be available and they will recognize active resource management.
2. Conditions on permits and licences regarding riparian habitat will reflect the same considerations as other resource activities/extraction, e.g., oil and gas, timber and fish and wildlife.

Ecological Systems

Management Objectives:

1. To protect Natural Areas, Ecological Reserves, Parks and Special Places nomination sites.
2. To manage public lands using landscape principles to maintain biodiversity.

Management Guidelines:

1. To encourage designation of Hubert Lake as a Natural Area. The existing protective notation designation will be maintained.

Fisheries

Management Objectives:

1. To maintain quality habitat for fish production in fish bearing streams, lakes and tributaries, particularly Driftwood and Fawcett rivers, Howard and Mink creeks, and French and Lower Dutch creeks.

Management Guidelines:

1. Surface disturbance near fish habitat will be managed through application of approved ground rules and regulations for oil and gas activity and timber management.

Minerals and Surface Materials

Management Objectives:

1. To allow for the exploration and development of minerals and surface material resources.

Management Guidelines:

1. Mineral resource exploration and development in sensitive areas will be subject to site-specific operating conditions to mitigate negative environmental impact.

Recreation and Tourism

Management Objectives:

1. To maintain opportunities for dispersed recreation (e.g., hunting, snowmobiling).
2. To maintain the aesthetic qualities of streams and lakes, their shorelines and backshores.

Timber

Management Objectives:

1. To provide a sustained yield of coniferous and deciduous timber for industry and local needs.
2. To provide opportunities for community participation in forest management.

Management Guidelines:

1. A Community Forest Advisory Board will be formed for the Miscellaneous Timber Use Area (MTU S7) to provide advice and information to the Land and Forest Service of Alberta Environmental Protection on:
 - allocation of wood in the MTU S7;
 - community industry development; and
 - community concerns regarding timber management.
2. Coniferous and deciduous timber disposition will be regulated through Quota Licences, Local Timber Permits, Commercial Timber Permits, Weyerhaeuser Forest Management Agreement and Alberta Pacific Forest Management Agreement.

Wildlife

Management Objectives:

1. To maintain adequate representation and distribution of habitat types for all wildlife species, particularly mature and over mature forest habitat.
2. To protect the chain of creeks and lakes located in Twp.70, R.24 and 25, Twp.71, R.25 and the lakes between the Athabasca and Pembina rives located in Twp.64 and Twp.65, R.2.
3. To maintain the natural state of habitat along the Driftwood and Fawcett rivers and Mink Creek.

Management Guidelines:

1. All forest management planning (including that by Forest Management Agreement holders and Quota holders) will incorporate wildlife habitat management.

APPENDIX 1

POLICY AND LEGISLATION

Legislative and Policy Framework

This section highlights those most relevant to the planning area.

White and Green Area

Public Land Administration in Alberta

Provincial public land is administered as White Area (Settlement Lands) or Green Area (predominantly forested lands). This (re)classification occurred in 1989 under Ministerial Order 15/89. The Big Bend planning area lies within both the White and the Green Areas.

White Area

The White Area is the settled region of the province and includes approximately 36.5 percent of the land in Alberta.

Green Area

The Green Area, established in 1948 by Alberta Order in Council 213/48, consists of unsettled forest lands and covers slightly over 53 percent of the province. Public land in the Green Area is managed for multiple use, including forest production, watershed protection, fish and wildlife management, recreation and industrial development. Permanent settlement, except on legally subdivided lands and agricultural uses other than grazing, have been excluded (Alberta Public Lands [Alberta 1981a]).

Public Lands Act

The Public Lands Act authorizes the Minister of Environmental Protection to administer public land in Alberta. The allocation of public land occurs through various mechanisms (e.g., licenses, permits, leases, including surface mineral leases).

Forest Act

The Forest Act provides for the management of the timber resource on provincial public land. This management includes timber or grazing dispositions.

Municipal Government Act

The Municipal Government Act (1995) provides for the planning and regulation of land uses and the pattern of settlement in Alberta. Most private development, whether private or public land, falls under the jurisdiction of the Act and any statutory plans adopted pursuant to it (e.g., Municipal Development Plan, Area Structure plan). The Crown is not bound by the Municipal Government Act, but occupants of public land, other than the Crown, are. Accordingly, permits for private developments falling within the scope of the Act must be issued by the appropriate local authority. Local authorities such as the Municipality of Lesser Slave River are responsible for issuing development permits on public and private lands under the authority of the Municipal Government Act. Private users of public land must satisfy the regulatory requirements of both the province and the local authority. Therefore, coordination between the public and private planning systems is essential. Indian Reserves and Metis Settlements, administered by the federal government, are not

bound by either of these jurisdictions; however their close ties to the land and forests in this area are recognized.

Mines and Minerals Act

The Mines and Minerals Act applies to all mines, minerals (excluding surface material resources such as sand and gravel) and related resources vested in, or belonging to the Crown in right of Alberta. Under authority of the Act, the administration, exploration and development of the province's mineral resources are regulated to encourage their orderly development by industry and to maximize benefits to the province and Albertans. Regulations and policies are designed to stimulate mineral development, providing revenue to the developer, and taxes and royalties to the province. Except for the Exploration Regulation administered by the Department of Environmental Protection, the Mines and Minerals Act is administered by the Department of Energy.

Wilderness Areas, Ecological Reserves and Natural Areas Act 1984

The Wilderness Areas, Ecological Reserves and Natural Areas Act (1984) consolidated the policy context for these three separate programs under one Act. Ecological Reserves are to be designated to protect representative landscapes of the province. This Act provides the public with the opportunity to submit recommendations regarding designation of wilderness areas and ecological reserves. Natural Areas, which are scattered throughout the province, were previously established under the Public Lands Act or were simply under reservation. These areas have a broader set of acceptable uses than ecological reserves or wilderness areas, including recreation, education and conservation uses.

Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act 1994

The Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act (1994) consolidated eight previous pieces of legislation under one act. The purpose of the Act is to support and promote the protection, enhancement and wise use of the environment and creates a framework in a single act that takes an integrated approach to protection of land, water and air. One of the Acts' cornerstones is the guarantee of public participation in decisions affecting the environment. This public involvement includes increased access to information, participation in the Environmental Assessment and Approval Processes and the right, when directly affected, to appeal certain decisions. Under the new legislation, those who operate or propose developments will be subject to firm but fair requirements that clearly spell out their environmental responsibilities. The Act establishes a legislated process for environmental assessments. This will ensure that potential environmental impacts are identified early in the planning process. At the same time, project proponents will benefit from an integrated, one-window approval process.

Fish and Wildlife Policy for Alberta

The Fish and Wildlife Policy for Alberta was approved by Cabinet and released in October 1982. This Policy provides general direction regarding outdoor recreation, wildlife resources, fisheries resources and regulatory aspects of fish and wildlife use. The policy calls for the preparation of comprehensive 10 year fish and wildlife resource management plans. Meeting the objectives stated in this plan will achieve a portion of the overall fish and wildlife projected demand targets identified in the Status of Fish and Wildlife Resource in Alberta (1984).

Alberta Forest Conservation Strategy

The Alberta Forest Conservation Strategy (AFCS), providing broad policy direction and guidelines for the future protection, use and enhancement of forests in Alberta, was recently completed and forwarded to the government of Alberta for consideration. One of the key directions proposed by this strategy is a shift from a sustained yield management approach for timber to an ecological management approach based on sustaining forest ecosystems.

Alberta Special Places

The Special Places Policy and implementation plan was initiated in March 1995 in response to a national and worldwide conservation strategic plan to preserve natural landscapes for the benefit of future generations. The intent of Special Places is to complete a representative network of natural landscapes that represent the environmental diversity of Alberta's six natural regions and twenty subregions by the end of 1998. These natural regions include: Canadian Shield, Boreal Forest, Foothills, Parkland, Grassland, and Rocky Mountains. Economic, social and cultural considerations are weighed against recommended Special Place sites. The goals of the program are: preservation, heritage appreciation, outdoor recreation, and tourism/economic development. While certain levels of use will be allowed in some Special Places, certain sensitive sites will not include any development.

Forest and Prairie Protection Act

The Forest and Prairie Protection Act allows the Minister to take what action is necessary to provide protection from fire, insects, disease and pollution clean up within the province. It also allows for investigations, billings and compensation for loss.

The Water Act

The Water Act was passed in spring 1996 and proclamation is expected in 1997 after the regulations are developed. The Act was developed in response to the inadequacy of the present Water Resources Act to meet the water problems and issues faced by Albertans today. Recurring water shortages, increasing municipal, agricultural and industrial water needs, in stream protection and water conservation are a few of the current issues. The Water Act provides comprehensive water management policies and legislation that reflect today's water management realities and allow us to meet future challenges. Sustainability of Alberta's water resources will be ensured through water management planning and addressing concerns regarding existing traditional uses of water for agriculture. The Act protects Alberta's rivers, streams, lakes, wetlands and ground water aquifers by requiring a strategy for aquatic environment be developed. The Act also prohibits the bulk export of water to the U.S., prohibits any new interbasin transfers of water and allows opportunities for Albertans to understand and provide advice on water management. Licenses in good standing will also be protected.

Wetlands Policy

The draft Wetland Policy for Alberta provides direction for the conservation and management of wetlands located throughout Alberta. It was prepared in response to the loss of sloughs and marshes in the Settled Area and in anticipation of increased demands on peatlands in the province. The role of the policy is to lay out the general framework for wetland management.

Alberta Tourism Recreational Leasing (ATRL) Process

The ATRL Process is designed to help proponents of tourism and recreation facilities, requiring a long term lease, through the government review and approval process. Smaller scale developments may be reviewed through other leasing processes. The ATRL Process deals only with unsolicited tourism and recreational development proposals on public lands. Alberta Environmental Protection has authority under the Public Lands Act to issue a variety of dispositions including leases for tourism and recreational activities. The local municipality has the authority under the Municipal Government Act to issue development permits. The ATRL Process allows proponents to become actively involved in the review process. Proponents can work closely with government agencies and municipal authorities to address any problems or concerns that may arise at any time from the conceptual planning stages. This replaces the Commercial Tourism and Recreation Leasing (CTRL) Process.

National Library of Canada
Bibliothèque nationale du Canada



3 3286 51357 0156